

April 13, 2023, MCC Impact on students without Interpreters

Hello,

My name is Vicki Brown, I am here tonight on behalf of the sign language interpreters, cued speech transliterators and our Deaf and Hard of hearing students.

I gave testimony before the Board of Education on Oct. 12, 2022, and March 28, 2023, regarding our efforts to be compensated at fair labor market rates by MCPS (Montgomery County Public Schools).

There is a dire need for interpreters and transliterators in MCPS to fill the needs of our students. The low rate of pay is a direct result of the inability to recruit and retain qualified interpreters. I would like to spotlight the long-term dedicated interpreters that continue to work for MCPS at less than labor market rates. Their experience, institutional knowledge, and commitment to students is unmatched.

There are gaps and sometimes full days of instruction that Deaf and Hard of hearing students are in classrooms without interpreters.

They are not receiving services legally mandated on their IEP

(Individualized Education Program) nor access to a Free and Appropriate Education under the IDEA (Individuals with Disabilities Act) The recent unanimous Supreme Court decision of Perez v Sturgis Public schools highlights this issue. Perez, who is deaf, had his rights violated by the failure to provide him with qualified sign language interpreters. I encourage you to read the decision.

[\(https://www.scotusblog.com/2023/03/court-rules-for-deaf-student-in-education-law-case/\)](https://www.scotusblog.com/2023/03/court-rules-for-deaf-student-in-education-law-case/)

MCPS's inability to retain and recruit Interpreters and Transliterators continues. While the vacancies impact us, the greater impact is on the Deaf and Hard of hearing students.

\* Without interpreters, students do not have equal access to education, or the opportunity to develop interpersonal relationships.

\*Without interpreters, students do not have access to student engagement through leadership, service, and extra-curricular activities.

\*Most importantly, without interpreters, students are denied access to education and communication in their native language, American Sign Language.

We are asking the Montgomery County Council to call on MCPS to correct the error by increasing compensation for interpreters and transliterators. A wage increase would retain our current staff and provide a competitive market to attract interpreters to fill the vacancies.

We are also asking the Montgomery County Council to fully fund the County Executive's budget. Good for our schools and even better for our students.

Thank you